



## THE PORTSMOUTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Headmaster: James Priory MA

6 June 2011

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To Year 12 Parents

Dear Parents,

This letter contains some important academic and procedural information relating to Year 12 this term.

### **The University Entrance Procedure in the Summer Term of Year 12**

As mentioned in the Year 12 letter at the start of the Easter break, at the end of the summer term there is a lengthy and detailed 'aspirations' process designed to ensure that all pupils have made appropriate choices for Higher Education. There are many important factors which feed into this process - a pupil's relationship and commitment to the subject evidenced through regular meetings with their Specialist Subject Advisor and the Year 12 examination results being two important ones.

At last term's UCAS evening on 15 February parents and pupils received a PGS UCAS guide and I would encourage you to make full use of this very detailed document. The School's policy is to ensure that UCAS applications are made early, as we have strong evidence to suggest that this results in more offers for our pupils. Year 12 pupils will have the opportunity to open their on-line UCAS applications at the UCAS morning on 5 July. By the end of the summer term we expect all pupils to have completed their applications, with the exception of the sections on University Choices and Personal Statement, which will be completed shortly after their return to school in September.

There is a considerable amount of support on offer. Please forward any questions or concerns to Dr. Galliver in the first instance, [p.galliver@pgs.org.uk](mailto:p.galliver@pgs.org.uk). Mr Taylor will also be pleased to answer any IB-specific queries, [s.taylor@pgs.org.uk](mailto:s.taylor@pgs.org.uk). In September all pupils will receive a senior teacher interview ahead of their application being sent to UCAS.

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## **Year 12 Exam Results and UCAS Predictions**

The results of the Year 12 examinations are internally awarded grades based on a pupil's performance in the Year 12 examinations. They are approximately equivalent to an AS grade/IB level. The maximum grade available at AS is an A and the maximum level available for the IB Diploma is a 7. For the IB, a two-year course, Year 12 internal examination papers will normally be adapted to tie in with material covered in the first year of teaching, and will be marked as closely as possible to actual IB criteria. For the A Level, the AS course is worth half the full A Level course, but departments who have covered A Level material may also include this in the Year 12 examination. Departments may also include performance in coursework or practical work in the Year 12 examination grade.

The UCAS predictions are aspirational and are not necessarily the level at which a pupil is currently working. The UCAS A Level grade/IB level prediction is the highest that we consider a pupil may achieve in each subject by the end of the A Level or IB course, with sustained diligence and hard work. These UCAS predictions should be used to assist pupils, parents and teaching staff in making appropriate university choices. The forthcoming Parents' Evening presents an excellent opportunity to discuss pupil progress, aspirations and targets with subject teachers and tutors. The UCAS Co-ordinator, Peter Galliver and the Director of IB, Simon Taylor, will also all be available.

## **PGS Extend Projects for Year 12**

The PGS Extend project is a vital part of the UCAS process for Year 12 A Level pupils. PGS Extend is a piece of independent research, normally undertaken over the summer holidays, which leads to an essay or a physical project, such as a piece of art or design work, a composition or even a blog. All pupils are invited to complete a PGS Extend but for Year 12 pupils of A Level it is compulsory. Pupils taking IB complete an Extended Essay as a requirement of the IB. There is a celebration event in the spring term when the best PGS Extend or IB Extended Essay is awarded the *Ithaka Prize*. Pupils may choose to submit their work to national or international competitions or complete a PGS Extend after undertaking work experience or studying in another establishment.

Aside from the enjoyment and fulfilment that pupils derive from completing an independent study of this nature, there is clear and growing evidence that



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universities place great emphasis on this – it should be mentioned in personal statements as evidence to university tutors of enthusiasm and detailed knowledge of a subject. The School may also refer to a pupil's PGS Extend or IB Extended Essay in a UCAS reference. Pupils who have been successful in gaining places at top universities often find they are asked about their PGS Extend or Extended Essay at interview. The process is 'launched' after the Year 12 internal examinations, when pupils will be given more detail. However, pupils can be reflecting upon this undertaking from now onwards and several pupils have already begun their work.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me using email, my address is [n.gallop@pgs.org.uk](mailto:n.gallop@pgs.org.uk) .

Yours sincerely

**N D Gallop**  
**Assistant Head (Head of Sixth Form)**